United Nations A/CN.10/PV.225

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

225th Meeting
Wednesday, 2 December 1998, 10.00 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Martinov ..... (Bulgaria)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Guillén (Peru), Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I declare open the 1998 organizational session and the 225th meeting of the Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters related to the 1999 substantive session, including the election of a new Bureau for the forthcoming meetings, the appointment of the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission and the adoption of a draft provisional agenda for the upcoming substantive session.

Adoption of the agenda

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): If there are no objections, I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda contained in document A/CN.10/L.43.

It was so decided.

Election of the Chairman and other officers

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my understanding that intensive consultations have been carried out on this issue, though as yet a final decision has not been reached regarding the election of the Chairman for the upcoming substantive session. Nonetheless, I would like to open the floor in an effort to learn whether delegations have proposals for candidates for the Vice-Chairmen's positions on the basis of the principle of rotation.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, for guiding the work of this important Commission.

I have the honour, on behalf of the delegations of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, to nominate the Mexican diplomat Ms. Angélica Arce as one of the Vice-Chairpersons of the Disarmament Commission. Ms. Arce has been a member of her country's foreign service since 1981. She has broad experience in multilateral affairs. She was assigned to the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the international bodies based in Geneva, Switzerland, and in the Mexican Foreign Ministry she has also been the department head for disarmament affairs and the director of international bodies. Since 1996 she has been the officer responsible for disarmament affairs at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations. We have no doubt that Ambassador Arce will perform her duties very successfully indeed.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): If I do not hear any other nominations, let me at this point extend congratulations to Ms. Arce, a colleague esteemed by us all. The Chair has no doubt whatsoever that as a member of our Bureau, Ms. Arce will contribute to the efficient functioning of this

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important Commission. I think representative of El Salvador, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group, has made a most felicitous nomination, and I congratulate the representative of Mexico.

I now open the floor for other nominations of Bureau members.

May I take it that consultations are under way to present the names for the Vice-Chairpersons for the Commission?

If so, I ask members to move ahead with the election process in order to fill the other remaining positions on the Bureau, including that of Rapporteur.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At this point I just wanted to convey to you that the Latin American and Caribbean working group that is dealing with this situation has not as yet come to a decision regarding the candidate we wish to put forward. As soon as we have reached a decision, we will of course communicate it to the Chair in due and proper form.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus elected one Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, and after further consultations we will proceed with the election of the other Bureau members.

As regards the election of the representative of Mexico as Vice-Chairperson, I should like to make that official.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Commission members are familiar with the way this Commission is organized. Therefore, as regards the selection of the other members of the Bureau before the next substantive session, I trust that Commission members will allow the Chair to carry out the relevant consultations so that by the time of the substantive session the selection of Bureau members will have been completed.

If this procedure meets with the Commission members' approval, I will consider this decision adopted.

It was so decided.

Review of the draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): As members of the Commission are aware, the First Committee adopted three draft resolutions on specific issues relating to the work of the Commission. For the information of members of the Commission and for the sake of clarity, I should like to refer to those three draft resolutions in order.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1 was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 73 (a), entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission". The relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution are paragraphs 6, 7 and 8. I shall read them out so as to better inform the members of the Commission.

(*spoke in English*)

Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 read,

"*Requests* the Disarmament Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and with paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 37/78 H of 9 December 1982, and to that end to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations on the items of its agenda, taking into account the adopted 'Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission';

"*Recommends* that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1998 organizational session, adopt the following items for consideration at its 1999 substantive session:

(a) The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned;

(b) Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N of 10 December 1996;

(c) [To be considered]

"*Requests* the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 1999 and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session"

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The second draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1 and was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 71 (i), entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". The relevant paragraphs are operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, which read,

> "*Decides*, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda, to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament;
>
> "*Endorses* the report of the 1998 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission and recommends that an item entitled 'Fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament' be included in the agenda of the Commission at its 1999 session, which should promote agreement on the agenda and timing of the special session;
>
> "*Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled 'Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament' and, subject to the outcome of the deliberations at the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, to set an exact date for and to decide on organizational matters relating to the convening of the special session."

The third draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1, was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 71 (j), entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures". The relevant preambular paragraph reads as follows:

> "*Recalling* the deliberations on 'Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N' in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and its relevance in the context of this resolution and of the ongoing work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission".

Operative paragraph 1 is also relevant, and reads as follows:

> "*Stresses* the particular relevance of the deliberations in the 1998 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission 'Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N' as a useful basis for further deliberations and encourages the United Nations Disarmament Commission to continue its efforts aimed at the adoption of such guidelines in 1999".

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I have just read out the parts of the draft resolutions that are relevant to the work of this Commission. Having informed members and apprised them of the content of the draft resolutions, I should like to know if any delegation wishes to comment at this stage on these draft resolutions adopted in the First Committee.

As there are no comments, I shall take it that we have completed the information segment on this subject.

Draft provisional agenda for the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The draft provisional agenda for the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is contained in document A/CN.10/1998/CRP.7.

Before giving the floor to speakers, I should like to say that, as Chairman, I have received information from various delegations with a view to enabling them participate in the work of the Commission constructively and in parallel with other meetings. Consultations are under way among those delegations in an effort to clarify two possibilities for the meetings of the Disarmament Commission. Such an approach would facilitate the participation of those delegations. I have the impression that the outcome of those consultations will be fruitful. Subject to the result of such consultations, I will put the draft provisional agenda to the Commission for adoption. The Bureau will in due course inform delegations as to the definitive date decided upon for the Commission's substantive meeting in this connection.

If there are no comments, I will take it that this decision is adopted — mindful that this will be possible as long as the session of the Commission is suspended while this idea is being moved along.

It was so decided.

Organizational matters

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since we have adopted the provisional agenda for the 1999 substantive session, I would like to take up the establishment of the Committee of the Whole, as well as of three Working Groups to deal with the provisional agenda we have just adopted.

The organization of work will be as follows: Working Group I will deal with the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned; Working Group II will deal with the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; and Working Group III will deal with guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N.

If there are no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to establish the Working Groups as I have described them.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Working Groups will of course need Chairmen. I now open the floor for any nominations that members may wish to make.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the delegations of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I am honoured to submit for consideration the candidacy of Mr. Emilio Izquierdo, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, for the chairmanship of the Working Group on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Mr. Izquierdo is a distinguished Ecuadorian diplomat with vast experience in the Foreign Ministry of his country and in the diplomatic service of his nation. He has all the necessary qualifications to carry out successfully the work of the Chairman, and I take special honour in submitting his candidacy.

Ms. Hamilton (Australia): Following consultations within the Group of Western European and other States, it is my pleasure to nominate Mr. Michael Hoey, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, for the chairmanship of Working Group III on guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N.

As colleagues are aware, Mr. Hoey is a very experienced diplomat. In particular, he has great expertise in the area of disarmament. He played an important role in this Working Group in previous years and I believe he chaired the Group in its first year. We can be confident that under his excellent leadership the Commission will be able to bring this item to a successful conclusion next year.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): If there are no further nominations, the Bureau proposes that the Commission approve the two nominations that have been made by the representatives of El Salvador and Australia for Working Groups I and III and that, if there are no objections, that the Commission pursue its consultations in order to nominate a candidate to the chairmanship of the remaining Working Group.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Bureau, allow me to congratulate warmly the two Chairmen who have just been elected to head Working Groups I and III. Mr. Izquierdo is a colleague whom we have known for several years. His contributions to the Commission and to other bodies and forums of the Organization have been very significant indeed. The representative of Ireland, Mr. Hoey, has also made continuous contributions to the work of the United Nations, which we all appreciate very much. I have no doubt that under their leadership the two Working Groups concerned will carry out their work very efficiently and expeditiously.

If there are no objections, I propose that the Commission continue its consultations in order to fill the remaining vacancy.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): As members will have noted, no nominations have yet been made for the post of Rapporteur, another required member of our Bureau. If the Commission agrees, and if there are no other proposals at this time,

I propose that the Commission also pursue consultations so that delegations can nominate a Rapporteur in order for the work of drafting the Commission's report for the substantive session can begin.

It was so decided.

Before concluding our programme, I should like to appeal to all delegations, in keeping with our methods of work, to continue consultations with a view to finalizing the Bureau's membership roster. There is no need for the entire Commission to be present at these consultations. Prior to next year's substantive session, we can apprise the Commission of the Bureau's membership and of any other matters on which delegations have held consultations.

If the Commission would allow us to continue these consultations, I am certain that this would greatly facilitate our work and that we would be in a position to inform next year's substantive session, as early as possible, of the outcome of our efforts. We could even do this before the session, if possible. We would thus keep the members of the Commission informed in this respect. If there is no objection, I will take it that that proposal is acceptable to the Commission.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): With the cooperation of representatives — which I greatly appreciate — I should like to suspend the meeting until next year. Once the consultations I mentioned earlier have ended, we will apprise the substantive session of their outcome.

The meeting was suspended at 11.05 a.m.